CHAPTER 6: WHEN WILL THIS INVASION HAPPEN? - PART C

In view of the 7 YEARS clear-up, there are only 2 possibilities: It must either be: 1. very early on in the 7 YEAR Tribulation or 2. BEFORE the Tribulation begins (that is, near the end of the Church-Age), even a number of years before the Tribulation.

Both these time periods qualify as being in 'the latter days and years', terms that apply to the whole period of the end-times when prophecy is again being fulfilled, so they apply to the closing days of the Church Age (when Israel is regathered to the Land), as well as to the Tribulation. I believe God has kept BOTH possibilities open to us, in order to preserve the Doctrine of IMMANENCY, that is, we must live as if the Lord could come to rapture us at any time (that is why there is this interesting coincidence of 7 years). God has determined that the prophetic knowledge of each generation of believers was such that for them the Rapture was imminent. As we approach the End of the Age this knowledge is increasing greatly, due to increased study of the Word and events coming to pass on the earth in accordance with Prophecy: "Shut up the words, and seal the Book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and (prophetic) knowledge shall increase"(Daniel 12:4). Thus as the end draws near, although we are getting a clearer understanding, our knowledge is limited to preserve immanency. Hence the 7 years!
However, it is important to point out that there is nothing in the various descriptions of Israel and the nations that is not true today. From this standpoint, we can say that it could happen at any time now, even before the Tribulation. In my opinion, this PRE-TRIBULATION Invasion is the most likely scenario, and that is why I am sharing this message with you, so that you will be ready when this happens to lead people to the Lord from Ezekiel 38,39.

*POSSIBILITY 5: Very near the Start of the TRIBULATION
The Rapture would be most devastating for the USA, making it easier for Russia to quickly seize the opportunity to attack Israel. In this Scenario, the Invasion happens in the first few months after the Rapture (Revelation 6:3,4).

*POSSIBILITY 6: PRE-TRIBULATION (Invasion Imminent!) However, I believe this invasion is best viewed as occurring before the Tribulation period, which means it will happen before the Rapture, for the Tribulation must start on the very day of the Rapture:

1Thessalonians 5:2,3: "For you yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord (the Tribulation) so comes as a Thief in the night (the Rapture). For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape (the Tribulation)."

Luke 17:28-30: "As it was in the days of Lot: they ate, drank, bought, sold, planted, built; but on the day that Lot (the believers) went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed (the believers will be removed in the Rapture from the scene of Judgement, and then on that very same day, Judgement will fall)."

Matthew 24:36-44: "But of that day and hour (of Christ's Coming in the Rapture) no one knows (this is Immanency), not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the Coming of the Son of Man (the Rapture) be. For as in the days before the Flood (a world-wide Judgement corresponding to the Tribulation),they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage (life will be carrying on as normal on the earth just before the Rapture; this is certainly not true of the 2nd Coming) until the day that Noah entered the Ark (corresponding to the disappearance of believers in the Rapture, removing them from the scene of Judgement just before it falls), and did not know until the Flood came and took them all away, so also will the Coming of the Son of Man (the Rapture) be.Then 2 men will be in the field: one (the believer) will be taken (to be with the Lord in the Rapture) and the other left(on earth to go through the Tribulation). 2 women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. (the word for 'taken' is the same as for when Joseph took Mary to be his wife, and is different word from the one used to describe Judgement, i.e.: "the Flood took them all away"). Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming (Immanency). But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the THIEF would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect (Immanency)."

*These 3 passages all confirm that the time of Tribulation Judgement begins on the very day of the Rapture. But, Immanency requires that the antichrist covenant of Daniel 9:27 (which initiates the 70th Week of the final 7 years) does not necessarily happen on the day of the Rapture. 2Thessalonians 2 makes it clear that the manifestation of

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antichrist and his covenant can only take place AFTER the Rapture. So, there will most likely be a few months of Tribulation before the final 7 years (of the 70th Week) begin. There is confirmation of this in Revelation, for only at the 7th Seal are the 144,000 anointed (Revelation 7), and it makes sense that the 2 Witnesses start their ministry at the same time, which is for the duration of the first half of Daniel's 70th Week (Revelation 11:3).

So, the order of events will be:
(1) The Rapture (resulting in the Church in Heaven in Revelation 4-5), followed immediately by the opening of the Seals in Revelation 5, resulting in the Tribulation Judgements coming upon the earth.
(2) Antichrist rises to prominence (Seal 1) resulting in the covenant with Israel a few months later, initiating Daniel's 70th Week. At this time, the 2 Witnesses and the 144,000 begin their Ministry.

The silence of Ezekiel 38 concerning antichrist and his 7-year treaty with the Jews implies this War occurs before he arises to make this covenant with them. Thus it is either Pre-Tribulation (Pre-Rapture), or it is very soon after the Rapture (before this covenant).
In support of the Pre-Tribulation timing, we note the following: (1) The description of Israel in Ezekiel 38 fits well with the nation as she is now established (before the Tribulation). She is a nation brought back from the sword (38:8). After 1900 years the Land is Jewish again and free from foreign domination. She is gathered from many nations (38:8,12). The continual waste places are now inhabited again (38:8,12). They are rebuilding the ancient places and turning them into modern towns. They dwell securely (38:11,14). This is often misconstrued as meaning a state of peace, but this is not the meaning of the Hebrew root 'batach', meaning "security." This Hebrew word is used 3 times in Ezekiel 38 (v8,11,14). This is not the security due to a state of peace, but security due to confidence in their own strength, or from having something or someone in whom to place confidence - a good description of Israel today. The Israeli army has fought 4 major wars since 1948 and won them swiftly each time. Today Israel is secure, confident that her army can repel any invasion from the Arab states. Israel is established before the Tribulation and dwells securely. (She also dwells in un-walled villages (38:11), descriptive of the present-day kibbutzim).
Some say that "dwelling securely" as used in the Old Testament always refers to Millennial security. The term is only used of life in the Millennium in a minority of cases. References where this is not true include: Leviticus 25:18,19; 26:5; Deuteronomy 12:10; 1Samuel 12:11; 1Kings 4:25; Psalm 4:8; 16:9; Proverbs 1:33; 3:23, 29; Isaiah 47:8; Jeremiah 49:31; Zephaniah 2:15). Jeremiah 49:31 is significant as it uses the very same phrases in Ezekiel 38:11.

Thus Ezekiel's vision does not demand Israel actually live at total peace with her Arab neighbours prior to this prophesied attack. In fact the Bible assures us that Israel and the nations will not find true peace until the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, returns to the earth. Israel will remain an armed camp surrounded by enemies committed to her destruction until God changes the hearts of mankind. Ezekiel's description could easily apply to the conditions that exist today.

In Conclusion, there is nothing in the various descriptions of Israel in this passage that is not true of Israel today. She already completely fulfils all the requirements given in the description of Israel in this passage. From this standpoint, the invasion can occur at any time, including some time before the Tribulation.

(2) A Russian Confederacy invades Israel during this time of security before the Tribulation. Russia today is still a major world power. Her rise to this position coincided with the re-establishment of Israel following World War II. It is significant that only in these last days of the Church-Age has Russia been a superpower capable of fulfilling Ezekiel 38.

(3) If the Russian Coalition is destroyed before the Tribulation,
this explains how the antichrist (the western leader) can quickly rise to become the dominant world-leader, making the crucial covenant with Israel and then rising to world-dictatorship 3.5 years after that. It is because Russia will be destroyed just beforehand and so is unable to oppose him. The 4th Gentile Empire, after the first stage of the Roman Empire, eventually split into an east-west division (the 2 legs of Daniel 2). The east-west axis is a balance of power. The eastern balance of power is now centred in Russia and the Moslem block of nations, while the western balance of power is with the democracies.

In light of Ezekiel 38, the Eastern balance of power will collapse with the fall of Russian forces and her Moslem allies in Israel and the destruction of Russia itself. With the eastern power destroyed, this will open the way for the rise of antichrist and one world government.

Thus Ezekiel's War will occur before the 7-year treaty. It will create the preconditions that allow the antichrist to consolidate his Revived Roman Empire in Europe, preparing the way for the treaty.

(4) This view best explains the 7 years of burning. We know that the 7 years cannot extend beyond the Tribulation, and it is even possible that the entire 7-year period could occur before the Tribulation begins. In fact, if it is a significant time before the Tribulation, Russia's defeat could help make way for the rapid rise of Babylon as antichrist's capital.

Some believe that the 7 years must start at least 3.5 years before the Tribulation, because at Mid-Tribulation the Remnant of Israel will be in flight from the Land. However, it is still possible that it starts as late as very early in the Tribulation, since there are those who will behind in the Land at Mid-Tribulation and continue to burn weapons.

One objection is: How could Israel apostatise so soon again after the nation has a revival? But surely this is no problem. This was often true in Old Testament history. There was speedy apostasy of Israel following the various miracles of the Exodus and the demonstration of God at Sinai. There was a speedy apostasy after the revivals of Hezekiah and Josiah. There was a speedy apostasy at Nineveh after the City repented under Jonah. This has happened before, and it can happen again.

Another objection states that this event happens in the latter days and years. But these terms simply apply to the whole period of the end times when prophecy is again being fulfilled, and so it can very easily apply to the closing days of the Church Age as well.

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Cheney School Hall
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Related to this is the idea that God will only start calling and treating Israel as “His People” (Ezekiel 38:16) again after the Rapture of the Church, so they conclude from this that the Invasion must take place after the Rapture. They say that God does not consider Israel as His People while the Church is still on the earth. This is just not true (a case of overdoing dispensational distinctions). Clearly it is God, Who has been working to restore His People Israel back to her Land as a Nation, after 2520 years of Gentile Dominion (see my book: ‘The 7 Times of the Gentiles’). Israel is still God’s Covenant People even while they are still blinded in unbelief, and her restoration as a nation shows that God is again dealing with her as a Nation - His Nation.